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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
IRAQI AGGRESSION AND THE CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 20 March 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 20 March 1991 by the Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan on Japan's policy towards the Middle East in the short term (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 23, 35 and 153, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yoshio HATANO
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of
Japan to the United Nations

ANNEX

Statement issued on 20 March 1991 by the Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan on Japan's policy towards the Middle East in the short term

1. The Middle East is a region of vital importance to Japan and the international community as a whole, with respect to international peace and security as well as to stable energy supplies. It is extremely important for Japan to assume its proper share of responsibility for the stability and prosperity of the international community, and to participate in efforts to address the problems in the Middle East as well as the global questions raised by the Gulf crisis.

2. Japan needs to enhance mutual understanding with the countries in the Middle East, for example, by promoting the exchange of persons with these countries.

3. Policies towards the Middle East should be formulated based on the principle of respect for the wishes and initiatives of the nations in the region and in a way that will assist their efforts.

4. The Government of Japan will actively participate in the process of securing stability and prosperity in the Middle East and in the world.

Its current thinking and the measures it intends to take are as follows:

1. Security in the Middle East

(a) Should the United Nations set up a peace-keeping operation, Japan will explore how it might extend financial and other assistance to such United Nations activities, according to their modalities;

(b) Japan will promote political dialogue on issues relating to security in the Gulf with the Middle East States, the front-line States and major States outside the region;

(c) Japan will encourage the efforts of the Gulf States to attain regional stability through cooperation for their sound economic development.

2. Arms control and disarmament

(a) In the light of the experiences gained in the Gulf crisis, and with a view to enhancing transparency and openness in international transfers of conventional weapons, Japan will contribute, mainly within the framework of the United Nations, to activities to establish standards and rules, including a system of reporting to the United Nations. Japan will call upon the countries concerned to consider improving and strengthening their legal and administrative frameworks for voluntary restrictions on the export of conventional weapons;

(b) As regards the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons), as well as missiles, Japan will endeavour to improve and strengthen the safeguard arrangements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and international frameworks for controlling the export of materials and equipment for such weapons. Japan will also expedite the process towards an early conclusion of the convention banning chemical weapons;

(c) On global arms control and disarmament, Japan proposes that the United Nations hold a Conference on Disarmament in Japan. Japan will present its positive stance in this conference, as well as in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

3. Peace process in the Middle East

(a) Japan's basic position on this matter is the attainment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace through

(i) Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories,

(ii) The recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State, and

(iii) The recognition of Israel's right to exist, based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Upholding this position, Japan will strengthen political dialogue with the major parties and countries concerned and participate actively in international efforts to promote an effective peace process;

(b) In view of the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, Japan will take appropriate measures to help support them and will consider the provision of emergency food aid;

(c) Japan will further promote various types of exchange with Israel, including the exchange of eminent persons;

(d) Japan supports the holding of an international conference as a framework of negotiations for achieving peace in the Middle East.

4. Economic reconstruction

(a) The Government of Japan will promptly extend humanitarian assistance to Kuwait if Kuwaiti authorities so desire. As for humanitarian assistance to Iraq, due consideration should be given to the appeals of international organizations, and should be extended in concert with other countries.

(b) Reconstruction aid for Kuwait will be extended mainly in the field of technical cooperation. As for reconstruction aid for Iraq, Japan will carefully follow changes in the Iraqi regime.

(c) Assistance to countries both in and outside of the region whose economies have been adversely affected by the Gulf crisis will be extended as appropriate, mainly through bilateral aid.

5. Cooperation in the field of environment

(a) Japan will extend as much cooperation as possible for reversing the damages caused to the environment by oil spills and the burning of oil wells.

Japan has dispatched a team to survey the oil spill and other environmental pollution, in addition to the materials and equipment it already sent to the region to combat the oil spill. Local needs will be identified based on the results of the survey, and possible cooperation measures will be taken.

(b) Japan will consider ways to extend cooperation in response to the appeals of international organizations.